

# HOW TO BUY CHEESE



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

HOME AND  
GARDEN BULLETIN  
NUMBER 193

PREPARED BY  
FOOD SAFETY  
AND QUALITY  
SERVICE

# HOW TO BUY CHEESE



Many countries have developed one or more varieties of cheese peculiar to their own conditions and culture.

When the colonists settled in the New World they brought with them their own methods of making their favorite kind of cheese. The first Cheddar cheese factory in the United States was built by Jesse Williams, near Rome, Oneida County, N.Y., in 1851. As the population increased in the East, and there was a corresponding increase in the demand for market milk, the cheese industry gradually moved westward. Cheesemaking in the United States and in the other leading cheese-producing countries of the world is now largely a factory industry.

Many of the popular varieties, although originating in Europe, are now produced in the United States and are available in most food stores, delicatessens and specialty cheese stores.

## MAKING NATURAL CHEESE

The making of natural cheese is an art centuries old. It consists of separating most of the

milk solids from the milk by curdling with rennet or bacterial culture or both and separating the curd from the whey by heating, stirring, and pressing. Most cheeses in this country are made from whole milk. For certain types of cheese both milk and cream are used and for other types, skim milk, whey or mixtures of all of these are used.

The distinctive flavor and body and texture characteristics of the various cheeses are due to: (1) the kind of milk used, (2) the method used for curdling the milk and for cutting, cooking, and forming the curd, (3) the type of bacteria or molds used in ripening, (4) the amount of salt or other seasonings added and (5) the conditions of ripening such as temperature, humidity and length of time. Sometimes only minor differences in the procedures followed may make the difference between one variety of cheese and another.

After the cheese has been formed into its characteristic shape it is given a coating of wax or other protective coating or wrapping and allowed to cure or age for varying lengths of time depending upon the kind or variety of cheese being made.

When the cheese has reached its proper curing stage it is often cut or sliced from larger blocks or wheels into more suitable sizes for consumer use. The refrigerated showcase in a modern food market is most enticing with its display of various shapes and sizes of cheese packages such as wedges, oblongs, segments, cubes, slices, blocks and cut portions.

## CARE IN THE HOME

All natural cheese should be kept refrigerated. Soft unripened cheeses, such as cottage, cream or Neufchatel, are quite perishable and should be used within a few days after purchase. Ripened or cured cheeses keep well in the refrigerator for several weeks if protected from mold contamination and drying out. When possible the original wrapper or covering should be left on the cheese. The cut surface of cheese should be covered

with wax paper, foil, or plastic wrapping material to protect the surface from drying. If large pieces are to be stored for any extended length of time, the cut surface may be dipped in hot paraffin. Small pieces may be completely rewrapped. Mold which may develop on cheeses should be scraped or cut from the surface of the cheese. The particular mold in the interior of such cheeses as Blue, Gorgonzola, Roquefort or Stilton has been carefully developed to produce the characteristic color and distinctive flavor of those varieties and is consumed as part of the cheese.

Ends or pieces of cheese that have become dried out and hard may be grated and kept refrigerated in a clean, tightly covered glass jar, and used for garnishing or accenting.

Cheese with an aromatic or a strong odor such as Limburger should be stored in a tightly covered jar or container. Such cheeses are fast curing and are best when used within a reasonable time after purchase.

Normally cheese should not be allowed to freeze as this may damage the characteristic body and texture and cause the cheese to become crumbly and mealy. However, small pieces (1 pound or less) not over 1 inch thick of certain varieties may be frozen satisfactorily for as long as 6 months if handled and stored properly. Since it is necessary that the cheese be frozen quickly, the temperature of the freezer should be 0° F. or lower. Cut cheese should be carefully wrapped (foil or other moistureproof freezer wrapping should be pressed tightly against surfaces to eliminate air, and to prevent evaporation), then frozen immediately. Among the varieties of cheese which can be successfully frozen in small pieces are: Brick, Cheddar, Edam, Gouda, Muenster, Port du Salut, Swiss, Provolone, Mozzarella, and Camembert. Small sizes as in the case of Camembert can be frozen in their original package. When removed from the freezer, cheese should be thawed in the refrigerator and used as soon as possible after thawing.

Except for soft unripened cheeses such as cottage and cream cheese, all cheese should be

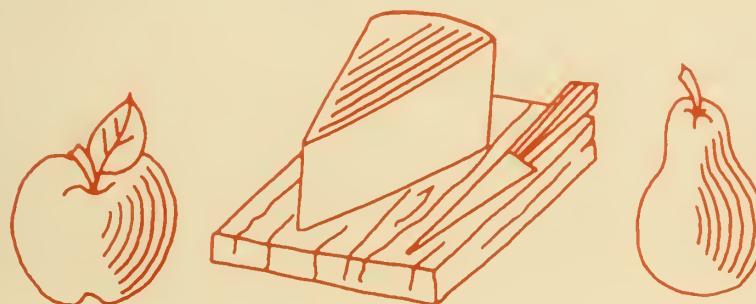
served unchilled in order to help bring out its distinctive flavor and texture characteristics. This usually requires 20 minutes to 1 hour or more at room temperature.

## USES

Cheese is one of the most nutritious and versatile foods. Because it is an excellent source of many important nutrients in the diet and because it is a well-liked food, cheese is used freely by nutritionists and homemakers in planning meals and in the preparation of many flavorful dishes. With the wide variety of flavors, colors, and consistencies to choose from, natural cheeses are suitable for any meal of the day, from appetizers to desserts, and between-meal snacks as well. Whether served separately or in combination dishes, cheese adds zest and flavor to other foods. There is a cheese to suit every taste, mood or occasion.

Some of the many ways of using different kinds of cheese are as follows:

- (a) Main dish in the form of fondue, soufflé, Welsh rabbit, omelet, pizza, or in combination with potatoes, other vegetables, rice, macaroni, noodles or spaghetti.
- (b) Salads and salad dressings.
- (c) Assorted cheeses on trays with fruit, nuts and crackers or chips.
- (d) Appetizers in the form of cut cheese or as spreads and dips.
- (e) Sliced in toasted or cold sandwiches or as an ingredient in sandwich spreads and sauces.
- (f) Grated as a garnish for soups, sauces and hot dishes.
- (g) Desserts, as cheese and crackers, cheese cakes, cheese pies, or fruit pies with cheese.



# RIPENING CLASSIFICATIONS

## Unripened

The soft unripened varieties such as cottage cheese contain relatively high moisture and do not undergo any curing or ripening. They are consumed fresh—soon after manufacture. The firm unripened cheeses such as Gjetost and Mysost also may be used soon after manufacture but because they contain very low moisture may be kept for several weeks or months.

## Soft Ripened

In the soft ripened cheeses, curing progresses from the outside or rind of the cheese, towards the center. Particular molds or culture of bacteria or both, which grow on the surface of the cheese aid in developing the characteristic flavor and body and texture during the curing process. Curing continues as long as the temperature is favorable. These cheeses usually contain more moisture than semi-soft ripened varieties.

## Semisoft Ripened

Unlike the soft ripened varieties, these cheeses ripen from the interior as well as from the surface. This ripening process begins soon after the cheese is formed, with the aid of a characteristic bacterial or mold culture or both. Curing continues as long as the temperature is favorable. These cheeses contain higher moisture than the firm ripened varieties.

## Firm Ripened

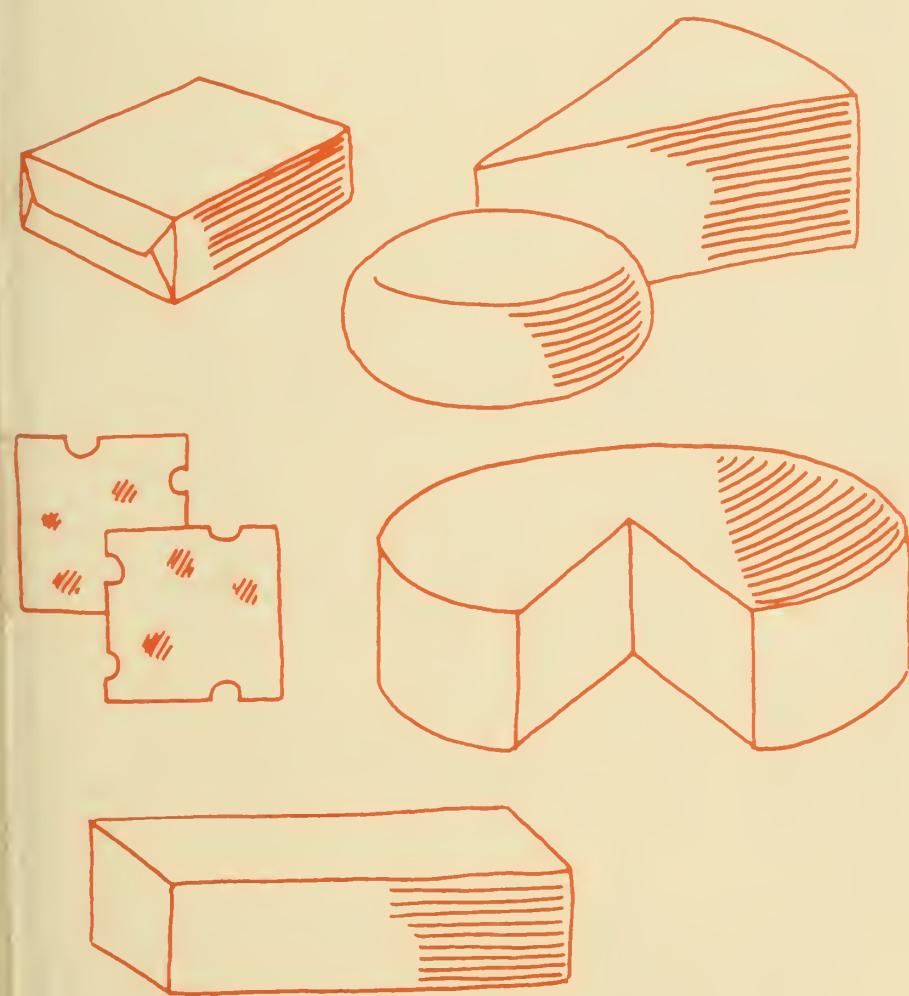
These cheeses ripen with the aid of a bacterial culture, throughout the entire cheese. Ripening continues as long as the temperature is favorable. The rate and degree of curing is also closely related to the moisture content. Therefore, these cheeses, being lower in moisture than the softer varieties, usually require a longer curing time.

## Very Hard Ripened

These cheeses also are cured with the aid of a bacterial culture and enzymes. The rate of curing however is much slower because of the very low moisture and higher salt content.

## Blue-Vein Mold Ripened

Curing is accomplished by the aid of bacteria but more particularly by the use of a characteristic mold culture that grows throughout the interior of the cheese to produce the familiar appearance and characteristic flavor.



## KINDS OF CHEESE

The charts in this pamphlet will help you in learning some of the more popular and generally available varieties of natural cheese, their general classification, principal characteristics, and some of their uses.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME POPULAR VARIETIES OF NATURAL CHEESES

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>SOFT, UNRIPENED VARIETIES</b>							
Cottage or Low- fat cottage Dry curd cottage (Unknown)	Cow's milk skim- med, cream added. Cow's milk skim- med.	Unripened..	Mild, acid... Soft, curd particles of varying size.	White to creamy white.	Cup-shaped con- tainers, tumblers, vegetables, sand- wiches, dips, cheese cake.	Cup-shaped con- tainers, tumblers, vegetables, sand- wiches, dips, cheese cake, desserts.	Salads, with fruits, vegetables, sand- wiches, dips, cheese cake.
Cream, plain (U.S.A.)	Cream from cow's milk.	Unripened..	Mild, acid... Soft and smooth....	White.....	3- to 8-oz. pack- ages	Salads, dips, sand- wiches, snacks, cheese cake, des- serts.	Salads, dips, sand- wiches, snacks, cheese cake, des- serts.
Neufchâtel (Nû-shä-tel'). (France)	Cow's milk.....	Unripened..	Mild, acid... Soft, smooth similar to cream cheese but lower in milkfat.	White.....	3- to 8-oz. pack- ages.	Salads, dips, sand- wiches, snacks, cheese cake, des- serts.	Appetizers, salads, snacks, lasagne, ravioli, noodles and other cooked dishes, grating, desserts.
Ricotta (Rî-cô'-ta) (Italy)	Cow's milk, whole or partly skimmed, or whey from cow's milk with whole or skim milk added. In Italy, whey from sheep's milk.	Unripened..	Sweet, nut- like.	White.....	Pint and quart paper and plas- tic containers, 3 lb. metal cans.	Pint and quart paper and plas- tic containers, 3 lb. metal cans.	Appetizers, salads, snacks, lasagne, ravioli, noodles and other cooked dishes, grating, desserts.

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>FIRM, UNRIPIENED VARIETIES</b>							
Gjetost, <sup>1</sup> (Yēt'ōst). (Norway)	Whey from goat's milk or a mixture of whey from goat's and cow's milk.	Unripened..	Sweetish, caramel.	Firm, buttery consistency.	Golden brown.....	Cubical and rectangular.	Snacks, desserts, served with dark breads, crackers, biscuits or muffins.
Mysost (Müs-ōst) also called Primost (Prēm'-ōst). (Norway)	Whey from cow's milk.	Unripened..	Sweetish, caramel.	Firm, buttery consistency.	Light brown.....	Cubical, cylindrical, pie-shaped wedges.	Snacks, desserts, served with dark breads.
Mozzarella (Mōtsa-re'lā) also called Scamorza. (Italy)	Whole or partly skimmed cow's milk. In Italy, originally made from buffalo's milk.	Unripened	Delicate, mild.	Slightly firm, plastic.	Creamy white.....	Small round or braided form, shredded, sliced.	Snacks, toasted sandwiches, cheese- burgers, cooking, as in meat loaf, or topping for lasagne, pizza, and casseroles.

<sup>1</sup> Imported only.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME POPULAR VARIETIES OF NATURAL CHEESES—Continued

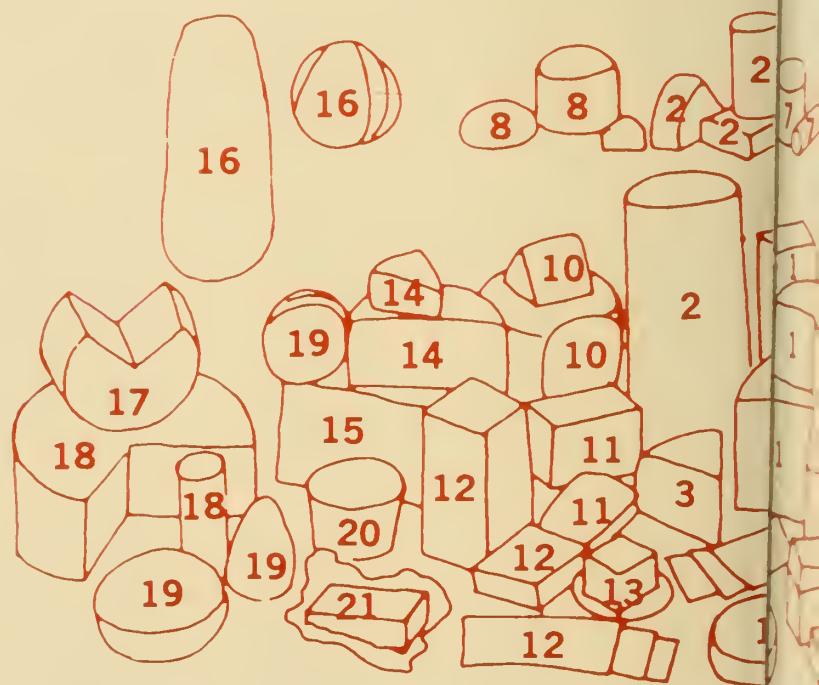
Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>SOFT, RIPENED VARIETIES</b>							
Brie (Bré) (France)	Cow's milk.....	4 to 8 weeks.	Mild to pun- gent.	Soft, smooth when ripened.	Creamy yellow interior; edible thin brown and white crust.	Circular, pie- shaped wedges.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, snacks, good with crackers and fruit, dessert.
Camembert (Kam'ém-bar). (France)	Cow's milk.....	4 to 8 weeks.	Mild to pun- gent.	Soft, smooth; very soft when fully ripened.	Creamy yellow interior; edible thin white, or gray-white crust.	Small circular cakes and pie- shaped por- tions.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, snacks, good with crackers, and fruit such as pears and apples, dessert.
Limburger (Belgium)	Cow's milk.....	4 to 8 weeks.	Highly pun- gent, very strong.	Soft, smooth when ripened; usually contains small irregular openings.	Creamy white interior; reddish yellow surface.	Cubical, rec- tangular.	Appetizers, snacks, good with crackers, rye or other dark breads, dessert.

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>SEMIsoft, RIPENED VARIETIES</b>							
Bel Paese <sup>2</sup> (Bœl Pä-ä'-ze). (Italy)	Cow's milk.....	6 to 8 weeks.	Mild to moderately robust.	Soft to medium firm, creamy.	Creamy yellow interior; slightly gray or brownish surface some- times covered with yellow wax coating.	Small wheels, wedges, seg- ments.	Appetizers, good with crackers, snacks, sandwiches, dessert.
(Brick) (U.S.A.)	Cow's milk.....	2 to 4 months.	Mild to moderately sharp.	Semisoft to me- dium firm, elastic, numerous small mechanical open- ings.	Creamy yellow . . . . .	Loaf, brick, slices, cut portions.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, snacks, dessert.
Muenster (Mün- ster). (Germany)	Cow's milk.....	1 to 8 weeks.	Mild to mellow.	Creamy white interior; yellow tan surface.	Circular cake, blocks, wedges, segments, slices.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, snacks, dessert.	
Port du Salut (Por du Sä-lü"). (France)	Cow's milk.....	6 to 8 weeks.	Mellow to robust.	Semisoft, smooth, buttery, small openings.	Creamy yellow . . . . .	Wheels and wedges.	Appetizers, snacks, served with raw fruit, dessert.

<sup>2</sup> Italian trademark—licensed for manufacture in U.S.A.; also imported.



## MEET THE FAVORITE AMERICAN-MADE CHEESES





## 21 CHEESES

1. Cheddar
2. Colby
3. Monterey or Jack
4. Pasteurized Process Cheese
5. Cheese Foods
6. Cheese Spreads
7. Cold Pack Cheese Food or Club Cheese
8. Gouda and Edam
9. Camembert
10. Muenster
11. Brick
12. Swiss
13. Limburger
14. Blue
15. Gorgonzola
16. Provolone
17. Romano
18. Parmesan
19. Mozzarella and Scamorze
20. Cottage Cheese
21. Cream Cheese



## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME POPULAR VARIETIES OF NATURAL CHEESES—Continued

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
FIRM RIPENED VARIETIES							
Cheddar (England)	Cow's milk.....	1 to 12 months or more.	Mild to very sharp.	White to me- dium-yellow- orange.	Circular, cylin- drical loaf, pie- shaped wedges, oblongs, slices, cubes, shredded, grated.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, sauces, on vegetables, in hot dishes, toasted sandwiches, grat- ing, cheeseburgers, dessert.	
Colby (U.S.A.)	Cow's milk.....	1 to 3 months.	Mild to mellow.	White to me- dium-yellow- orange.	Cylindrical, pie- shaped wedges.	Sandwiches, snacks cheeseburgers.	
Caciocavallo (Kä' chō-kä-val'ō). (Italy)	Cow's milk. In Italy, cow's milk or mixtures of sheep's, goat's, and cow's milk.	3 to 12 months.	Piquant, similar to Provolone but not smoked.	Firm, lower in milkfat and mois- ture than Pro- volone.	Light or white interior; clay or tan colored sur- face.	Spindle or ten-pin shaped, bound with cord, cut pieces.	Snacks, sandwiches, cooking, dessert; suitable for grating after prolonged curing.
Edam (Ē'dām) (Netherlands.)	Cow's milk, partly skimmed.	2 to 3 months.	Mellow, nut- like.	Semisoft to firm, smooth; small irregularly shaped or round holes; lower milkfat than Gouda.	Creamy yellow or medium yellow-orange interior; surface coated with red wax.	Cannon ball shaped loaf, cut pieces, oblongs.	Appetizers, snacks, salads, sandwiches, seafood sauces, dessert.

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>FIRM RIPENED VARIETIES: Continued</b>							
Gouda (Gou'-dá) (Netherlands)	Cow's milk, whole or partly skimmed.	2 to 6 months.	Mellow, nut- like.	Semisoft to firm, smooth; small irregularly shaped or round holes; higher milkfat than Edam.	Creamy yellow or medium yellow-orange interior; may or may not have red wax coating.	Ball shaped with flattened top and bottom.	Appetizers, snacks, salads, sandwiches, seafood sauces, dessert.
Provolone (Prō-vō-lō'-nē) also smaller sizes and shapes called Provo- lette, Provo- lone, Provo- lonecini. (Italy)	Cow's milk..... .....	2 to 12 months or more	Firm, smooth..... .....	Mellow to sharp, smoky, salty.	Light creamy interior; light brown or golden yellow surface.	Pear shaped, sausage and salami shaped, wedges, slices.	Appetizers, sand- wiches, snacks, souffle, macaroni and spaghetti dishes, pizza, suit- able for grating when fully cured and dried.
Swiss, also called Emmentaler. (Switzerland)	Cow's milk..... .....	3 to 9 months.	Sweet, nut- like.	Firm, smooth with large round eyes.	Light yellow..... .....	Segments, pieces, slices.	Sandwiches, snacks, sauces, fondue, cheeseburgers.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME POPULAR VARIETIES OF NATURAL CHEESES—Continued

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>VERY HARD RIPENED VARIETIES</b>							
Parmesan (Pär'- mē-zān') also called Reggiano. (Italy)	Partly skimmed cow's milk.	14 months to 2 years.	Sharp, piquant.	Very hard, gran- ular, lower mois- ture and milkfat than Romano.	Creamy white.....	Cylindrical, wedges, shred- ded, grated.	Grated for season- ing in soups, or vegetables, spaghetti, ravioli, breads, popcorn, used extensively in pizza and lasagne.
Romano (Rō-mā'- nō) also called Sardo Romano Pecorino Ro- mano. (Italy)	Cow's milk. In Italy, sheep's milk (Italian law).	5 to 12 months.	Sharp, pi- quant.	Very hard granular..	Yellowish-white interior, greenish- black surface.	Round with flat ends, wedges, shredded, grated.	Seasoning in soups, casserole dishes, ravioli, sauces, breads, suitable for grating when cured for about one year.
Sap Sago <sup>1</sup> (Săp'- să-gō). (Switzerland)	Skimmed cow's milk.	5 months or more.	Sharp, pun- gent clover- like.	Very hard.....	Light green by addition of dried, powdered clover leaves.	Conical, shakers..	Grated to flavor soups, meats, macaroni, spaghetti, hot vegetables; mixed with butter makes a good spread on crackers or bread.

<sup>1</sup> Imported only.

Kind or name Place of origin	Kind of milk used in manufacture	Ripening or curing time	Flavor	Body and texture	Color	Retail packaging	Uses
<b>BLUE-VEIN MOLD RIPENED VARIETIES</b>							
Blue, spelled Bleu on imported cheese. (France)	Cow's milk.....	2 to 6 months.	Tangy, peppery.	Semisoft, pasty, sometimes crumbly.	White interior, marbled or streaked with blue veins of mold.	Cylindrical, wedges, oblongs, squares, cut portions.	Appetizers, salads, dips, salad dress- ing, sandwich spreads, good with crackers, dessert.
Gorgonzola (Gör-gon-zö-lä). (Italy)	Cow's milk. In Italy, cow's milk or goat's milk or mix- tures of these.	3 to 12 months.	Tangy, peppery.	Semisoft, pasty, sometimes crumbly, lower moisture than Blue.	Creamy white interior, mottled or streaked with blue-green veins of mold. Clay colored surface.	Cylindrical, wedges, oblongs.	Appetizers, snacks, salads, dips, sand- wich spread, good with crackers, dessert.
Roquefort <sup>1</sup> (Röök'-fört) or (Röök-föör'). (France).	Sheep's milk.....	2 to 5 months or more.	Sharp, slightly peppery.	Semisoft, pasty, sometimes crumbly.	White or creamy white interior, marbled or streaked with blue veins of mold.	Cylindrical, wedges.	Appetizers, snacks, salads, dips, sand- wich spread, good with crackers, dessert.
Stilton (England).	Cow's milk.....	2 to 6 months.	Piquant, milder than Gorgonzola or Roque- fort.	Semisoft, flaky; slightly more crumbly than Blue.	Creamy white interior, marbled or streaked with blue-green veins of mold.	Circular, wedges, oblongs.	Appetizers, snacks, salads, dessert.

<sup>1</sup> Imported only.

## PASTEURIZED PROCESS CHEESE

Pasteurized process cheese is a blend of fresh and aged natural cheeses which have been shredded, mixed and heated (pasteurized), after which no further ripening occurs. It melts easily when reheated. The blend may consist of one or two or more varieties of natural cheese and may contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables, or meats. Smoked cheese or smoke flavor may also be added.

The flavor of pasteurized process cheese depends largely upon the flavor of the cheese used which may be modified by flavoring materials added. Pasteurized Gruyere cheese has a nut-sweet flavor, somewhat similar to Swiss.

Some other available varieties are: pasteurized process American cheese, pasteurized process Swiss cheese, pasteurized process Swiss cheese blended with American, and pasteurized process Brick cheese.

Process cheese is packaged in slices,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -, 1- and 2-pound loaves and cut portions.

It may be used in main dishes, for snacks and cheeseburgers, with cold cuts and salads, on grilled or toasted sandwiches, in numerous sandwich combinations and in casseroles.

## PASTEURIZED PROCESS CHEESE FOOD

Pasteurized process cheese food is prepared in much the same manner as process cheese except that it contains less cheese, with nonfat dry milk, or whey solids and water added. This results in a lower milk fat content and more moisture than in process cheese. Pasteurized process cheese food also may contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables or meats or may have a smoked flavor.

Cheese food is milder in flavor, has a softer texture, spreads more easily and melts quicker than process cheese due to the higher moisture.

The most popular variety is pasteurized process

American cheese food and is packaged in slices, rolls, links and loaves.

It may be used in any place where process cheese is used though it is not likely to add as much cheese flavor.

## Pasteurized Process Cheese Spread

Pasteurized process cheese spread is made in much the same manner as pasteurized process cheese food but generally contains higher moisture, and the milk fat content is usually lower. A stabilizer is used in the preparation of this product to prevent separation of ingredients. It is normally more spreadable than cheese food. Cheese spread also may contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables or meats or may have a smoked flavor.

The flavor of pasteurized process cheese spread depends largely upon the flavor of the cheese used which may be modified by flavoring materials added.

Some available varieties are: pasteurized process American cheese spread, pasteurized process pimento cheese spread, pasteurized process pineapple cheese spread and pasteurized process Blue cheese spread.

Spreads are packaged in jars and loaves convenient for use as snacks, in stuffing celery stalks, and in deviled eggs, noodle casseroles, meat balls, hot vegetables, sandwiches, sauces, and dressings.

## Coldpack Cheese

Coldpack cheese or Club cheese is a blend of the same or two or more varieties of fresh and aged natural cheese, as in process cheese, except that the cheese is mixed into a uniform product without heating. It may have a smoked flavor.

The principal varieties are coldpack American cheese and cold pack Swiss cheese.

The flavor is the same as the natural cheese used and usually is aged or sharp. The body is

softer than the natural cheese and it spreads easily.

Coldpack cheese is packed in jars, rolls, or links and it is especially good as an appetizer, snack, or dessert.

## COLDPACK CHEESE FOOD

Coldpack cheese food is prepared in the same manner as Coldpack cheese but includes other dairy ingredients as used in process cheese food. In addition, sweetening agents such as sugar and corn sirup may be added.

Coldpack cheese food may contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables or meats or may have a smoked flavor.

The flavor resembles the cheese from which it is made but is milder. It is softer than the natural cheese and spreads more easily due to the other ingredients added and the higher moisture content.

It is packaged in the same way as Coldpack cheese and may be served in the same manner.

## BUYING CHEESE

### CHECK THE LABEL

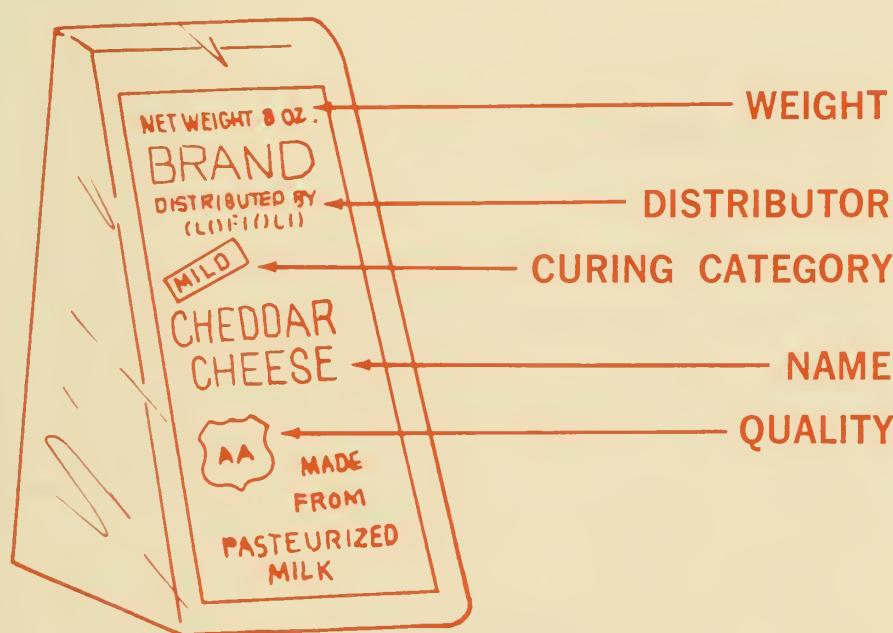
The labels of natural cheese, pasteurized process cheese, and related products carry important descriptive information. The name of a natural cheese will appear as the variety such as "Cheddar cheese", "Swiss cheese", or "Blue cheese."

Pasteurized process cheese labels will always include the words "pasteurized process", together with the name of the variety or varieties of cheese used, for instance, "pasteurized process American cheese" or "pasteurized process Swiss and American cheese".

Cheese food also contains ingredients other than cheese and therefore is labeled as "pasteurized process cheese food". Cheese spreads have a different composition from cheese foods and

are labeled as "pasteurized process cheese spread". All the ingredients used in the preparation of these products are listed on the respective label along with the kinds or varieties of cheese used in the mixture. Also the milkfat and moisture content may be shown.

Coldpack cheese and coldpack cheese food are labeled in the same manner as other cheese and cheese foods except that "club cheese" or "comminuted cheese" may be substituted for the name "coldpack cheese".



## CHECK THE CURE

A very important bit of information on the label of certain varieties of natural cheese pertains to the age or degree of curing. For instance, Cheddar cheese may be labeled as "mild", "medium" or "mellow", or "aged" or "sharp". In some cases pasteurized process cheese may be labeled to indicate a sharp flavor when a much higher proportion of sharp or aged cheese was used in its preparation.

## CHECK THE NAME

Look for the name of the article. Do not confuse the brand name with the name of the cheese. For some purposes you may want natural cheese,

for others, process cheese or cheese food, and for still others, pasteurized process cheese spread or coldpack cheese may best serve your needs. In many cases they may be packaged alike but the names on the labels will be different.



## CHECK FOR QUALITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has established U.S. grade standards for four varieties of cheese: Cheddar, Colby, Monterey, and Swiss. The cheese industry uses the grade standards to identify levels of quality, to have a basis for establishing prices at wholesale, and to provide consumers with the qualities they want.

Cheddar cheese carrying the USDA grade shield on the label of consumer-size packages is available in several sections of the United States.

The USDA grade shield means that the Cheddar cheese has been inspected and graded by an experienced and highly trained Government grader. And it means the cheese was produced in a USDA inspected and approved plant, under sanitary conditions. It is your guarantee of consistent and dependable quality.

Cheddar cheese carrying the U.S. Grade AA shield is the highest quality. It meets exacting USDA standards, has a fine, highly pleasing Cheddar flavor, a smooth compact texture, uniform color, and attractive appearance.

To earn this grade, cheese must be produced with special care—in the quality of the milk, cheese-making skill, curing or ripening process, and packaging.

The AA shield is assurance of consistently fine Cheddar flavor and texture in every package.



Cheddar cheese bearing the U.S. Grade A shield on the package is also of good quality—but not as high as AA. The flavor is pleasing; however, there may be more variation in flavor and texture between packages.

Cheese and cheese products not covered by U.S. grade standards may be inspected for quality according to other quality specifications and bear the USDA "Quality Approved" shield on the label. Cottage cheese is an example of a cheese product bearing the "Quality Approved" shield.

To carry the "Quality Approved" shield, the product must be manufactured in a plant meeting the USDA sanitary specifications for plant and equipment.





3 1262 08582 9801

# HOW TO BUY CHEESE

**CHECK THE TYPE** Natural, pasteurized process, or coldpack

**LOOK FOR THE USDA SHIELD**



**U.S. Grade AA & A** Found on Cheddar cheese. Grade AA is top quality; fine flavor, smooth texture. Grade A is almost as good.

**Quality Approved** Found on cottage cheese, may be used on other cheeses. Means good quality.

ISSUED SEPTEMBER 1971  
SLIGHTLY REVISED MAY 1977